

Reducing waste at Christmas time



Scotland will throw away over 50,000 tonnes of food and drink in December, including 280,000 turkeys, 240,000 Christmas puddings and 3.5 million mince pies.

Scotland's Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment Richard Lochhead – who recently announced his intention to introduce a formal food waste reduction target for Scotland – teamed up with Scottish celebrity chef Tony Singh to urge people to plan ahead, resist the temptation to over-buy and help to cut the amount of food they throw away over the festive period.

The advice comes as part of European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR, 21 – 29 November), which encourages people throughout Europe – including public authorities, private companies and the general public – to arrange activities which promote the importance of reducing waste. In Scotland, over 100 EWWR events have been scheduled, demonstrating the crucial role that waste reduction plays in reducing carbon emissions and boosting the economy.

Environment Secretary Richard Lochhead said: “In October, I announced the very encouraging news that since 2009, avoidable food waste in Scotland had dropped by almost eight per cent, representing an annual saving of around £92 million for households throughout the country. There's so much more to be done, however, particularly during the festive period – when we've previously seen a spike in food waste figures as people admit to throwing away more food at this time of year than any other.

“Planning ahead for the party season is easy to do. It's

crucial that we all play our part to reduce food waste and appreciate the very significant environmental and economic impact it has. Tony Singh is widely recognised as one of the country's top chefs, and I know he shares my passion in terms of helping Scotland to work towards becoming a zero waste society. He is a fantastic ambassador for Scotland and I'm delighted that we're able to make the most of his expertise as a seasoned chef and restaurateur during European Week for Waste Reduction."

Tony Singh – perhaps best known for his many appearances on the BBC's *Great British Menu*, as well as one half of the duo *The Two Incredible Spice Men* with fellow chef Cyrus Todiwala – partnered with Scottish Government-funded organisation, Zero Waste Scotland, to provide his top five tips for planning ahead effectively, during the party season:





Tony's tip 1.

*"You can keep waste to an absolute minimum when cooking Christmas dinner – as well as avoid putting people off their dessert – by **calculating and controlling portion size**. Do a few simple calculations based on your Christmas Day guest numbers.*

*"In the restaurant trade, we create recipes around a basic adult or child size portion. You can do this by applying a simple formula of 140g turkey (100g for a child), two tablespoons of carrots (one for a child), two florets of cauliflower (one for a child), four brussels sprouts and one parsnip (1/2 for a child), to each portion. Multiply that quantity by the number of guests you're entertaining and you will be able to accurately work out your requirements and therefore cut down on your food waste very easily. The key thing to remember is **don't be tempted to overload your guests' plates**. Being presented with too much food can be off-putting and can end up wasted – it's far better to allow people to ask for more if they want it."*

Tony's tip # 2.

*"Don't worry if you overestimate slightly and make a bit too much on Christmas Day itself. You can continue to plan ahead for the days following Christmas by keeping your **festive leftovers aside** to make some very quick, easy and healthy **recipes** that I've created exclusively for this campaign. Let's face it – no one can really be bothered*

cooking on Boxing Day and, in any case, people are usually looking for something a bit lighter. My noodle & turkey broth, healthy veggie & tomato curry or turkey and slaw baguette are the perfect day-after antidote to a heavy Christmas dinner!"

Tony's tip # 3.

"Only attempt a Christmas shop if you're first of all armed with a **very specific shopping list**, based on your pre-calculations. That way, if you're tempted by one or two additional special offers, they're less likely to go to waste since you're not buying an excess of the other essentials. Remember to check your cupboards first too, as you may already have a lot of the ingredients you need. It goes without saying that you should **check the use-by dates on fresh items**, and buy the freshest you can find on the shelves, usually stocked towards the back. Make a conscious decision not to get sucked in by the glossy advertising, marketing and special offers around Christmas time. Stay focused and only buy what you need on your list."

Tony's tip # 4.

"Think ahead about your **guests' preferences**. If you know you don't have any Christmas pudding fans, don't buy any! Instead, base your dessert choices around the things you know your guests will enjoy, and if you don't know, ask! Be creative – perhaps a chocolate yule log or a simple trifle would be better-received, and again, calculate the quantity needed by multiplying the number of portions by the number of guests. Leftover cheese needn't be wasted either – it freezes very well and can be kept frozen until you need it later, perhaps at New Year."

Tony's tip # 5.

"**Think like a professional chef**, save time and reduce the hassle on Christmas Day by **preparing** as much **in advance** as possible. By washing, chopping, bagging and freezing your veg

in advance – such as sprouts and carrots – you can save a lot of time and they will retain the same nutritional value as if you prepared them from fresh.”

Tony’s tip # 6.

*“**Buy local produce** wherever possible – it’s a good idea to place an advance order with your local grocer or butcher for exactly what you need by a specific time, so that you’re not tempted by last-minute bargains during a panic-stricken trip to the shops, which may otherwise end up wasted. And don’t throw out your leftover mince pies – check the use-by date, and if you know you’re not going to eat them, save them and take them into work for your sweet-toothed colleagues post-New Year!”*

Tony Singh commented: “It’s great to be working with the Scottish Government and Zero Waste Scotland on this fun and festive food waste reduction campaign – and I’m delighted to have provided some festive leftover recipes to keep the cooks inspired after the big day.

“I hope that by sharing some of the experience I’ve gained in over 25 years of working in the restaurant trade, I can really help people to reduce their food waste at Christmas, as well as to save a considerable chunk off their festive food bill.”

For the post-Christmas feast leftovers, Tony has created a set of exclusive lighter, healthy and delicious recipes to re-energise revellers, which make the most of ingredients like roast turkey and vegetables.

TONY’S FESTIVE LEFTOVER RECIPES

1. Egg Noodle and Turkey Broth

This is such a simple but delicious recipe, and can be done with any type of leftover meat you have. You can either make the stock yourself, or just use a stock cube on its own. Either way it's an absolute winner with the kids, who unwittingly wolf down the leftover sprouts in this great winter warmer.

For the stock:

Ingredients

Leftover roast turkey bones – pick off as much meat as you can and chop or break up the carcass as small as you can

Vegetables – just use whatever raw veggies you have, such as one large onion, one large carrot and a stick of celery

1 stock cube – veggie, chicken or beef

Method

Select a pan large enough to accommodate both the bones and the vegetables and add the stock cube.

Fill the pan with just enough cold water to cover the bones and veg. Bring to a simmer and cook gently for an hour, but if you can do two, that's better.

Strain and use in the broth below, or freeze and use from frozen whenever needed.

For the soup:

Ingredients

Leftover roast turkey stock (as above)

2 tsp garlic puree

1 inch piece of ginger peeled and grated

1 onion, thinly sliced

1 pepper, quartered and thinly sliced

140g medium egg noodles

Leftover turkey meat, shredded

Leftover Christmas veggies – especially the sprouts

1 bunch spring onions, sliced

1 small bunch of coriander, chopped

Soy sauce to taste

Chilli oil to taste, recipe below. (You can also buy it in supermarkets – it's a great store cupboard ally and helps make any leftovers taste great)

Method

Bring the stock to the boil and throw in the aromatics – the onion, garlic and ginger.

Simmer together for four minutes, then add the noodles and simmer for a further three minutes. Stir in the leftover turkey and veg, then simmer for another two minutes.

Season with chilli oil and soy sauce to taste.

To serve, ladle into bowls, scatter the spring onion and coriander on top and drizzle with a little chilli oil as desired.

2. Chilli Oil

Ingredients

100g chilli flakes

20g Szechuan peppercorns, crushed

200ml rapeseed oil

Sea salt

Method

Place oil in a deep, medium pan.

Place the pan on a high heat for about four mins. Check if it's hot enough by dropping in a couple of flakes – if the oil is ready, the chilli should sizzle.

Take the pan off the heat and add the other ingredients. Stir well, pop a lid on and leave to one side for about an hour.

Use when cool – the flavour will develop and deepen over time.

3. Leftover Turkey-filled Bánh mì.

A super tasty Vietnamese street food-inspired baguette with homemade slaw, stuffed full of delicious roast turkey. You can use any type of bread you have handy – a well fired morning roll also works well!

Ingredients

2 small baguettes

Leftover pâté from your Christmas feast (don't worry if you don't have any)

3 inch piece of peeled & de-seeded cucumber, thinly sliced

2 big handfuls leftover turkey – a mix brown and white meat, shredded

Butter (for spreading)

Mayonnaise – enough to mix to your taste

1 chilli, chopped

Fresh mint (small bunch), chopped

Fresh coriander (small bunch), chopped – including the stalks

Salt & freshly ground pepper

For the slaw

1 chilli (with seeds), chopped

2 small carrots, coarsely grated

150g white cabbage, thinly sliced

150g red, white or spring onion, finely sliced

2 inch piece of ginger, grated

1 tbsp vinegar (any type)

1 tsp sugar (adjust to taste)

Juice of 2 limes

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp fish sauce (adjust to taste)

Method

To make the slaw, mix the carrots, cabbage and onion into a bowl.

In another bowl, mix the ginger, vinegar, lime juice, sugar and fish sauce together with the chilli and taste it – you're

looking for a balance of hot, sweet, sour and salty. Pour the sauce on to the vegetables and toss together. Set aside.

Meanwhile mix the leftover turkey in a bowl with mayonnaise, chopped chilli, salt and pepper. Halve the baguettes lengthways, then spread the butter followed by a generous layer of pâté over the bottom half. Top with the slaw, cucumber and turkey mixture, then sprinkle over the mint and coriander leaves. Serve.

4. Mixed Leftover Veg and Tomato Curry

Ingredients

2 large onions, sliced

1 tin chopped tomatoes

2 tbsp tomato puree

3 tbsp rapeseed oil

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cumin seeds

2 tsps garlic puree

2 inch piece of ginger, peeled & finely chopped – or you can use pureed ginger

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp turmeric

1 tsp chilli powder

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsps ground coriander

1 tsp garam masala

Salt to taste

1 pint water

Method

Heat the oil in a pan on a medium heat. Add cumin seeds – as soon as they begin to change colour, add onions and sauté until well-browned.

Add garlic paste and ginger paste and continue sautéing. Add turmeric and mix. Add tomatoes and stir. Add tomato puree and salt.

Mix and add chilli, coriander, garam masala. Sauté on a medium heat till oil begins to separate.

Add the water, bring to the boil, then simmer for 20 minutes to allow the mixture to reduce a little. Keep an eye on the mixture to ensure it doesn't burn, stirring once in a while. Then, add all the leftover veggies, bring back to the boil and simmer for a further 10 minutes. Serve with rice.

For more advice and tips on how to plan ahead for Christmas and cut down on your food waste, visit www.scotland.lovefoodhatewaste.com

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